

Note: This is an example of a Language Experience story that was dictated to a teacher who attended my workshop in 2008. She said she had been working with this special needs ELL student for three years trying to teach him to read. His progress was minimal and laborious until she used LEA. He was so excited about reading his own stories that he worked diligently, anxious to read them to everyone. The teacher said that using this strategy, he “turned the corner” on reading. He sent me several of his stories and gave me permission to share them with teachers.

The Day I Almost Died

by Tito

One day I was playing with my youngest sister, Chita and our friends at our friend Mira’s grandma’s house. One of my older sisters, Juana Gallos, came by on my dad’s horse by the stone wall where I was standing. She asked us if we wanted a ride. I said, sure. She told me to get on the back of the horse. My friends were still playing by the stone wall and Juana and I rode past the store and then the church. When Juana pulled the reigns to turn the horse around, the reigns broke. The horse got scared because the broken reign hit him and cut him. The horse started running really fast. Juana couldn’t stop him because the reigns were broken. She tried to pull his mane but he didn’t stop. The horse knew the way back to our house, so that’s where he was running. He was running so fast that I almost fell off, but I held on tightly to the saddle and so did my sister. Since I was falling down I wrapped legs around his belly. But that made the horse even madder and he ran even faster. When the horse got to our house, which is next to Mira’s grandma’s house, right near the stone wall, the horse reared back and Juana fell off and hit her head on the wall. I tried to grab the horse’s neck but I was so tired I couldn’t hold on and I fell off and hit my head too. I tried to get up but I fell back down

and didn't wake up until I was in Mira's uncle's truck on the way to the hospital. I could hear what they were saying but I couldn't get up or open my eyes. I thought I was dead!

When I could finally open my eyes, I saw that my shirt and my hands were all bloody. My mom was crying and holding me tight. When we got to the hospital the doctor was saying things but I couldn't understand. They took Juana to another room. They gave me an IV because I needed stitches. Then I fell asleep again. When I woke up I had to stay at the hospital for a long time. They needed to make sure that I was ok.

After almost two months, I couldn't stand being in the hospital any more. I just wanted to go back home. When I got back home, I was so proud. I started thinking how happy I was that I didn't die. I went into my room and looked at all my stuff. On my desk, there was a photo of my family and I was so glad that I would be able to see my dad again, who was living in America. Then went back to the stone wall and found two rocks that still had blood from Juana and I, when we fell. I took those rocks and buried them in the yard. Now, whenever I am mad or sad, I look at the place where I buried the rocks, and I remember that I could have died.